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Newsletter



OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CLINTON P. ANDERSON, *Secretary of Agriculture*
CHARLES F. BRANNAN, *Director*

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WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

The latest Department of Agriculture report on retail food prices places additional emphasis on the need for food conservation as a weapon against high prices. This report charts each month the retail cost of the family "market basket." The basket contains quantities of farm food products equal to the 1935-39 average annual purchases per family of 3 average consumers.

Retail prices of these products rose nearly 2 percent from mid-December to mid-January 1948. Cost of the market basket in December was \$684 and in January \$695. The January figure was 14 percent higher than that of January 1947 and 104 percent higher than the 1935-39 average. This average placed a price tag on the market basket of \$340.

These figures point up the desirability of using money-saving dishes to help the family budget and combat high food prices.

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The Department of Agriculture is engaged in research to reduce egg losses which cost producers and consumers millions of dollars annually. About 2 billion eggs, or 5 percent of all eggs produced each year, become inedible or broken during transit from producer to consumer.

Research includes a study of these losses and where they occur, and construction of cases and cartons that give better protection to eggs. Handlers, warehousemen and common carriers are cooperating in the work.

Another project seeks new and wider uses for poultry products. Its objective is to ferret out reasons for and ways to avoid lowered quality in poultry meat and eggs, as well as new and improved uses for some of the by-products in the processing of meat and eggs.

As for the latter purpose, this phase of the project is in direct line with the program to conserve and use all foodstuffs.

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Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson stressed the importance of food and feed conservation in a talk recently on the American Farmer broadcast (ABC). Some excerpts:

"It is true that crop prospects are better than at this time last year. So the situation should be improved after the next harvest. But until that time we know that we have to rely on conservation to ease serious shortages...."

PIG MORTALITY

The Farm Activities Division of the Office for Food and Feed Conservation has printed over 650,000 copies of the pamphlet, "Save Grain By Cutting Pig Losses." Industry is cooperating wholeheartedly in the program by helping to distribute these pamphlets to farmers. At the same time, 50,000 posters are being distributed, advising farmers to "Save More of Your Pigs For Market." The posters point out that four out of ten pigs never grow up. They die on the farm, at various ages, for one reason or another.

THE NEED FOR FOOD ABROAD

From an editorial in the New York Times:

"Such are the ravages of tuberculosis in undernourished Europe that the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund is to carry out the greatest mass inoculation on record.....Some 50,000,000 out of 230,000,000 hungry children in eleven European countries are to be tested for tuberculosis, with the certainty that only 15,000,000 will be free of infection. These 15,000,000 can be immunized by inoculation with BCG. The fate of the 35,000,000 who will prove to be infected is problematical. No provision can be made for wholesale curative work. Hence, the importance of proper food and clothing....

"Such an undertaking of mercy is bound to be expensive...An appeal for voluntary contributions has been addressed to forty-five countries by the Crusade for Children of the American Overseas Aid -- United Nations Appeal for Children. This country's contribution must be \$60,000,000 (most of it for clothing and food) if some millions of European children are to be saved from malnutrition and tuberculosis..."

THE NEED FOR FREEDOM GARDENS AT HOME

This month's issue of Parents' Magazine, which has a circulation of more than 1,150,000, contains an article entitled "This Year Plant a Freedom Garden" by Paul F. Frese.

The subhead on the article says:

"It's a hedge against high prices -- a guarantee of fine fresh vegetables -- your share toward increasing the world's food supply."

The story reads in part:

"No one need tell you that food for the family -- and plenty of it -- is a big item today in the family budget here in America, and an unknown quantity in many struggling countries in Europe and Asia. That's why it is so practical and providential to pick up your hoe again and join the national drive for the planting this spring of 20,000,000 food gardens -- Freedom Gardens, Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson has called them. People who know the facts and figures have made important statements which all of us must face, such as:

"According to official reports, more than half the wages of the average worker are going to the grocer and to the butcher stores these days.

"Let us remember also that under the best possible conditions, the world will continue to be short of food in the year ahead. In many needy countries, the people will continue to rely on imported grain...

"In a world united for peace, the present food picture would be serious enough. In the actual world in which we are living -- a world which has so far been unable to arrive at sound peace settlements -- food weighs heavy on the scales of destiny....

"Right now, conservation of food and feed is a number one job.."

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The phrase, "Food Fights For Democracy," is particularly applicable at this time when Italy is in danger of being engulfed by totalitarian forces.

This government is keenly aware of the importance of food in sustaining the democratic principles of countries in Western Europe.

For example, the Department of Agriculture, in announcing grain export quotas for May, stated that the May allocation to Italy, in addition to quantities being exported to that country from other sources, appears to be adequate to maintain the cereal rations until indigenous supplies become available.

Then, the Department added:

"If subsequent developments threaten maintenance of the Italian cereals ration at present levels, such as a sudden, drastic reduction in shipments from other supplying areas, the United States would make every effort to allocate and ship such emergency quantities as might be required."

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The Department of Agriculture's Extension Service is encouraging county and state extension leaders to make personal contact with world conditions as a means of furthering international relations.

The value of such contact is exemplified in the work of Miss Sara Kerr, State home demonstration leader of New Hampshire, who attended the Amsterdam sessions of the Associated Country Women of the World. She has given 46 talks in New Hampshire on her experiences and observations.

An example of how Miss Kerr's talks are appreciated is contained in the following quotation from a letter sent to Extension Director H. B. Stevens of New Hampshire by Mrs. Isaac Hill, of Concord, president of the Council of Church Women:

"I want to express to you our appreciation of having Miss Sara Kerr for our principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Council of Church Women. She brought us an interesting story of her experiences in several countries last summer and told me of conditions as she found them.

"It makes everyone who hears her want to do all she can to help alleviate suffering in any way possible, in food or clothing or any other way.

"I would like to thank your department for sharing her with us."

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"Surveys show that the average family does not consume as many fresh vegetables as it should for maximum nutrition.

"By helping himself to meet increasing living costs, the home gardener will be helping his own community to make a precious contribution to a hungry world."

THE BIG IF

From an article in the Christian Science Monitor by Dr. John D. Black, professor of economics at Harvard University:

".....the world is still short of food. We must plan our production this year, and probably next, as if there will be unfavorable weather in some major-producing areas, for only so will we be sure of having enough..."

SOFT-NOSED BRICKBAT

We printed an item in the March 5 issue telling about a series of six ten-minute broadcasts by WNOX (Knoxville, Tenn.) on grain conservation. The station has justifiably "caught us up" on this item. And we're glad to relay the information that, in addition to this series, WNOX "broadcasts regularly many programs about this subject as well as items of general farm interest."

We will keep you informed on events in Washington and the programs of local committees and organizations. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to send us news of your activities in the voluntary food and feed conservation program.